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The six hundred and thirty-sixth meeting of the Club was held at the Rembrandt Hotel, London, on the 20th September, 1966.

Chairman: Dr. J. F. Monk

Members present: 11; Guests 7.

Dr. A. R. Phillips spoke on some birds of Mexico and he has kindly supplied this summary of his talk:—

The habitats on the eastern side of Mexico and Central America are largely of a wet tropical nature, continuous throughout, and those on the west are mainly arid lowlands from northern Costa Rica to California. Mountain pine—oak habitats are fairly continuous from northern Nicaragua to western Canada, and high mountains without pines dominate Costa Rica and western Panama.

The birds, still imperfectly known, are most easily grouped by Merriam's Life Zones: these intertwine intricately and there are no sharp demarcations between Holarctic or Nearctic and Neotropical faunas. Endemism is highest in mountains and arid regions, low in humid regions whose fauna is essentially Neotropical.

Most birds nest at times of optimum humidity, but hole-nesters seem to breed early enough for their young to emerge before the rains; hummingbirds and *Diglossa* chiefly after the rains when flowers abound. Photoperiodism plays little, if any, role.

Migrations vary greatly; ringing is of little help because of the very low recovery rate, but much can be learned from study of the subspecies. Birds of the eastern and central parts of North America tend to migrate along the Caribbean side of Mexico and winter farther south than north-western or Texan birds, few of which go beyond Guatemala or northern Nicaragua. Many eastern birds reach western Mexico, but few western ones move far eastward. Of special interest are tropical genera (*Ictinia*, *Elanoides*, *Cypseloides*, *Myiodynastes*, *Legatus*, *Progne*; also *Contopus sordidulus* and *Vireo olivaceus* and *altiloquus*) that perform long migrations to winter in South America. Most hummingbirds and some waders have circular migrations, the former following the flowering seasons. In

several cases—in swallows and some other families—the same species winters much farther north in the Pacific than in the Caribbean lowlands, or may even have two different winter ranges, but much remains to be learned.

On the validity of *Coracias caudata suahelica* Neumann, 1907

by P. A. CLANCEY

Received 4th April, 1966

Since its description in 1907 *Coracias caudata suahelica* Neumann, the type-locality Usagara, Tanganyika, has not been admitted by systematists, and the name seems to have been discussed only twice in the literature, firstly by Grant, *Ibis*, 1915, pp. 261, 262, and secondly by Friedmann, *U.S. Nat. Mus. Bull.*, No. 153, 1930, p. 376. Currently only two races of the Lilac-breasted Roller *C. caudata* are recognised, these being *C. c. caudata* Linnaeus, 1766: Angola, and *C. c. lorti* Shelley, 1885: plateau south of Berbera, northern Somalia, the latter well differentiated on the basis of having the white streaked lilac area of the ventral surface restricted to the fore-throat and adjacent lateral areas. Nominotypical *C. caudata*, as at present understood, occupies the greater part of the species' range, extending from Natal and the Orange River in South Africa, north to Angola, the southern Congo, Uganda, Kenya, and south-western Somalia. A recent study of material from much of the range of the present *C. c. caudata* suggests the existence of an unequivocal basis for Neumann's proposal to sub-divide the typical race of this roller as outlined in *Journ. f. Ornith.*, vol. iv, 1907, p. 593, these investigations now necessitating the critical re-appraisal of *C. c. suahelica*. Neumann, *loc. cit.*, differentiated *C. c. suahelica* from *C. c. caudata* on the grounds of a darker nuance to the blue of the rump, upper tail- and lesser wing-coverts, a character which seems to have eluded later students.

The type-locality of *C. c. suahelica* is Usagara (or Sagara according to the *Times Atlas*, vol. iv, 1956, pl. 92), which general area lies immediately to the south of a line Dodoma-Kilosa in eastern Tanzania. A series of specimens in the collection of the Durban Museum, taken for us in 1964 by Mr. T. E. Irwin, at Kilwa Kivinje and Kilwa Masoko, immediately to the south-east of Sagara and on the coast, differs quite markedly from a like sample from Angola, the type-locality, as follows: frons and supercilia clearer and less buffy white; blue-green of head-top, nape and hind neck darker (Deep Dull Yellow-Green [2], *vide* Ridgway, *Color Standards and Color Nomenclature*, 1912, pl. xxxii, as against Chromium Green [same pl.], the basal surface of each feather less buffy), the tips of the feathers tending to bleach or metamorphose to a clearer, less greenish, blue. Mantle, scapulars and tertials much darker and more saturated olive-brown (Saccardo's Umber [pl. xxix], as opposed to Buffy Brown [pl. xl]), the green fringing duller, less yellow. In the wings, the dark ultramarine is less restricted to the lesser wing-coverts in series, tending to be more bled into the caerulean of the median and greater coverts, while on the lower back and rump the blue is darker (as originally claimed by Neumann) (about